



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Convicted of Traveling from Virginia to D.C. To Have Sex With 13-Year-Old Child

WASHINGTON - Craig Byrnes, 53, of Washington, D.C., pled guilty today in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to one count of traveling interstate to engage in illicit sexual conduct, announced Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, James W. McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

Byrnes appeared today before the Honorable Judge Ricardo M. Urbina. He faces a maximum sentence of 30 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for February 10, 2011.

This case was brought as part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood initiative and investigated by the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force, which includes members of the Metropolitan Police Department.

According to a proffer of evidence presented during today's court proceeding, between July 22, 2010 and August 5, 2010, an MPD member of the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force, who was operating undercover and posing as a pedophile as part of an investigation, communicated to the defendant via text messaging and telephone.

During the course of those communications, the undercover officer told Byrnes that he had access to a 13-year-old boy. Byrnes expressed interest in the boy and stated that he hoped that he wouldn't get "caught." The defendant agreed to meet the child in Washington, D.C. and engage in sexual contact with the boy. On August 5, 2010, Byrnes traveled from Virginia, where he was working, to a pre-arranged meeting place in Washington, D.C. When he arrived at the meeting time and place, he was stopped and placed under arrest.

In February 2006, the Attorney General created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better

locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

In announcing the plea, U.S. Attorney Machen, Assistant Director McJunkin and Chief Lanier commended MPD Detectives Timothy Palchak, Miguel Miranda, Jonathan Andrews, and Mornai Hines, and the Special Agents from the FBI's Washington Field Office who worked on the case. They also commended U.S. Attorney's Office Legal Assistants Teesha Tobias and Latoya Wade. Lastly, they thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Julieanne Himmelstein and David Kent, who are prosecuting the case.

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